

IN THE CLAIMS:

Applicant, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.121, submits the following amendments to the claims:

1.-12. Cancelled.

13. (Previously presented) A method of making a financial transaction over the internet comprising:

electing, by a purchaser, to pay for selected items from a merchant by credit card means using a virtual credit card terminal (VCT) comprising credit card means reader, a digital processing device operatively associated with said credit card means reader and encoding transaction programs that allows opening of an interactive terminal window for processing of the transaction, and wherein said virtual credit card terminal is registered with a VCT gateway;

providing the purchaser with a transaction number from said VCT gateway, a merchant identification and an amount to transact from the merchant, wherein said merchant is registered with said VCT gateway;

entering, by the purchaser, details of credit card means into the virtual credit card terminal to facilitate formation of a VCT transaction request;

sending the VCT transaction request to said VCT gateway;

processing the VCT transaction request by the VCT gateway to facilitate formation of a bank transaction request ;

sending the bank transaction request from the VCT gateway to a bank;

processing the bank transaction request, whereby advice is sent from the bank to the VCT gateway as to whether the transaction has been approved; and

sending the advice from the VCT gateway to the merchant and the purchaser.

14. (Currently amended) The method of making a financial transaction over the internet of claim 13[[1]], further comprising, if the transaction has been approved, providing the merchant and the purchaser with a transaction authentication code.

15. (Currently amended) The method of making a financial transaction over the internet of claim 14[[2]], further comprising: providing, by said purchaser, the merchant with delivery details; and providing, by said merchant, said purchaser with a merchant receipt.

16. (Currently amended) The method of making a financial transaction over the internet as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 15[[1 to 3]], wherein the merchant obtains the transaction number from said VCT gateway and then provides it to the purchaser.

17. (Currently amended) The method of making a financial transaction over the internet as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 15[[1 to 3]], wherein the virtual credit card terminal is remote from a location where the merchant's items are physically displayed for sale.

18. (Currently amended) The method of making a financial transaction over the internet as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 15[[1 to 3]], wherein the virtual credit card terminal is set up at a retail outlet of the merchant.

19. (Currently amended) The method of making a financial transaction over the internet as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 15[[1 to 3]], wherein the credit card means is a credit card with a data encoded magnetic strip, and wherein entering details of the credit card means occurs by passing the credit card through the credit card means reader and separately entering an assigned personal identification number.

20. (Currently amended) The method of making a financial transaction over the internet of claim 19[[7]], wherein said digital processing device includes a screen, processor and a key pad.

21. (Currently amended) The method of making a financial transaction over the

internet of claim 19[[7]], wherein said digital processing device is an internet-connected telephone, personal digital assistant, pager, communicator, smartphone, an interactive television, or an interactive household appliance.

22. (Currently amended) The method of making a financial transaction over the internet of claim 19[[9]], wherein the credit card means reader is operationally associated with an individual digital processing device by a digital certificate which is used in each transaction.

23. (Currently amended) The method of making a financial transaction over the internet as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 15[[1 to 3]], wherein the VCT gateway is a stand-alone server or a server that is part of an electronic data processing section of a bank, credit provider, or other financial institution.

24. (Currently amended) The method of making a financial transaction over the internet as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 15[[1 to 3]], wherein processing of the VCT transaction request by the VCT gateway involves representing information but not analyzing information for transaction approval purposes.